

A TOUR IN NEW MEXICO

LEUT. WHEBBER'S EXPLORING PARTY.

The Last of Civilization—Crossing the Rio Grande—Description of an Indian Town—Explorations West of the One Hundred Meridian.

[Special correspondence of the Republican.]

CAMP NEAR FORT WHEELER, N. M., May 10, 1890.

We have crossed the Rio Grande—that is, we have left civilization behind us, and shall not probably look upon a human being again until we reach our own country, unless we reach Camp Apache, Arizona, a month hence. Our journey from Santa Fe to where we are now is pleasant as we had anticipated. The heat was not intense, and the white water was as cool and nearly always unobnoxious, or alkaline, and the scenery black, dry

On January 10 we crossed the Rio Grande, near the mouth of the Rio Conchos. It was a very difficult, though the river is here divided into three main channels and several smaller ones. The current is very swift, and almost takes a man down. As noted the Greasers of the Mexican village of the guide told us that soldiers were sent over to found for a crossing, who became tired in quicksand, but extricated themselves and their mules without much difficulty. We remained encamped on the banks of the river two days, small parties being sent out to reconnoitre and make notes of the surrounding country. On the 12th we started again, and as we were seated outside our tents enjoying the pipes, the moonlight and the novel scenery, when presently our ears were assailed by the sound of a rushing muske, and up marched a herd of wild horses.

land, (comp of one fighter), all having come especially to entertain us. The sister possessed some talent and no little practice, but, no doubt, her voice was somewhat husky, and she overcame her senility by consenting to represent me. She sang in solo at some ranch or hacienda regularly. We exhibited our knowledge of Spanish by calling out at the end of each performance, "¡Buena Noche!" and "¡Buenos Días!" and "¡Buenas Tardes!" The leader, of our party called him *andrés*, after hearing the Mexican coughing and expectorating shortly afterwards, we knew he had been treated to a dose, of course.

The Rio Grande, which flows in must respect to Western rivers, is here valuable for a distance of some seven miles each way; just as broad here as at its mouth, over a thousand miles off; for its waters are so shallow, and its volume so small, that it is sufficient to neutralize the heat from the sun by evaporation and the sandy and porous nature of

the soil over which it passes. On each side are two small ponds about two miles broad, enclosed by a chain of low hills. The river flows five feet above the river. On the islands in the river grows the green cottonwood cedar, but outside of this there is no vegetation. As far as the eye can reach, the country is a vast plain, and we have the usual trane-like country of the valley, with the barren and fowering, while nothing is to be seen of insect, reptile or animal life, but the small birds, turtle and an occasional rattlesnake. Half a mile from the mouth of the hamlet of Rio Grande, the Adobe house is the same color as the surrounding, and it requires a sharp eye to be able to see that there is a difference. The house is not a flower-house (its climate habitation, though it is a flower-house through the hamlet, which may be caused there to make the place a little paradise, with the rocks of sleep, each numbering a few hundred.

the evening Mexican sheep, like their owners, were poor, ragged and half starved. The day before the last shearing was to have commenced, and in the morning the sheep were made to swim across one of the bridges that crossed the river and back, several being carried down the river and drowned. They could not have been induced to take the water at all had not a few goats been used as a decoy.

On the 9th we arrived at San Salidro, where we found an alkaline stream, a few Mexican horels, and a small Indian pueblo, with its surrounding well-tilled fields, neat adobe houses and shade trees. The people were friendly to the neighboring Mexican hamlet, but regret that I had not time to visit the Indians, and gather some information from them. We did, however, visit the ruins of an old temple. Its exterior was that of an ordinary adobe building, but the interior was entered by means of a ladder through the

on the stack on the flat roof, descending to the corner on another ladder. Here we entered a room of the same size, but with the walls five feet high; walls plastered, but not whitewashed. To the north, raised a few feet from the ground was an altar of adobe, (mud bricks), having the figure of a seated man, with a beard and a turban. On the wall over it was a picture of a rainbow. On the wall to the right were pictures of birds flying toward heaven, and of priests praying to Montezuma for rain. On the walls facing east and west were pictures of the sun and moon, and of a bearded man, wearing a robe of bears and leopard, and holding a bow and arrow. On the wall to the south, was an excellent picture of a buffalo bull and cow, evidence that the buffalo did once roam over this country.

On the east wall, near this picture, was a picture of a Catholic priest, which was discovered by the Indians, who are nominally Christians, though really they still believe in and ex-

of this place, San Saldo, in the vicinity of the Colorado river, about three miles west of it. A spring bubbles through a rock having the shape of a hollow tree stump. It water has the taste, buoyancy, and no doubt the medicinal properties of the water of San Saldo we met with a short distance from here. The water is not so good as though not so on so grand a scale as that of the Colorado river, I had supposed some to that water. The table lands, some three hundred feet high, with steep, rounded, rounded, rounded, straight, square like, surmounted by strata of rocks shapes so regularly as to present the appearance of masonry. On the 9th of June we reached the mouth of the magnificent river, to judge from the numerous cottonwood trees which mark its course, but, alas, containing not a drop of water, except at one place, where a deep hole was still half full of stagnant water. We were disappointed to find no water here. Here we camped in the darkness.

the surrounding country, and on the morning after our arrival started to ascend a peak, five miles from camp, called the Cabañon, which was a very high, jagged mountain. The ascent was in every direction, and from which it was important to take topographical and barometric notes. Imagine a huge mole hill rising seven or eight miles in circumference, and composed of loose volcanic rock and lava, with slanted cedar trees growing to every crevice. The ascent was made by a peak of loose volcanic rock, rising to a height of over four hundred and fifty feet, except on one side where we thought ascent might be practicable, and accordingly went at it heart and soul, following the lead of our guide, Lieutenant H. who is the chief of our branch of the army, and was climbing up some two hundred feet of almost perpendicular rocks, our Mexican guide, and

During the ascent a huge bowler, to which we had fastened the rope we used as an anchor, came down upon us with an appalling noise, and so closely by one of the party as to strike him on his hand and crush into a thousand pieces a large tin of food which he had fastened to his care by his momentary rest. After this accident, however, the chief of the party turned upon the captain and said, tragically, "Sir, had you loved your country more and yourself less you would have been killed." "You are right," he replied, "but I am not a hero, I am a man, and I must be a man's life." "You are right," he replied, "but I am not a hero, I am a man, and I must be a man's life."

keenly felt by the unhappy 8, to jangle from his maddened snail and melancholy air. Well, we were not to be so sad, and had a noble bird-eye view of the surrounding country. The first one hundred and twenty miles in every direction.

The descent was much more dangerous than the ascent, but securing well the rope, and holding it tight, the descent was made with comparative ease. The peak again, we all safely reached, and the descent was made with comparative ease. The descent was much more dangerous than the ascent, but securing well the rope, and holding it tight, the descent was made with comparative ease. The descent was much more dangerous than the ascent, but securing well the rope, and holding it tight, the descent was made with comparative ease.

On the following day, after passing a number of springs whose waters were either too alkaline or too strong, we descended to a small, but very well-exposed cool belt, from which a fine stream of clear, ice-cold, but slightly sulphurous water issued, proving quite a treat. Next day we descended to a very sulphurous spring, which, in part, was very sulphurous spring water (donkeys), encamped near, and continued our descent to the foot of the mountain. The warriors, the husband of the only squaw in the

beds at daybreak and build a fire so warm
burns, half an inch of ice having formed
the night before. The thermometer the
previous afternoon had stood at 92 degrees.
Much amusement is provided us by the
member of the party who was seized with ver-
tigo on the cables on the night of the 12th.
The reason, he says, is that the
reasons make may select him as a bed-fellow,
accordingly he beats his bed and the walls of
the tent all night, and three or four times a night
he heard him wailing the ruminations of his tent,
and the sound of his bed, and the sound of his
make, so that what of sleep is coming his
shadow to grow less every day. On the 31st
of May we reached the Mexican settlement of San
Juan, the nearest place to the party of the
same color, the same color as the ground on which they
are built. Nothing can be seen to indicate that
human beings have lived here over twelve years,
except the usual, same-colored, same-colored

known without which the Mexican nation would not become extinct. It carries every warrior from the first to the last, and is the only thing that keeps the Indians from going to the jungle pine tree. One of the queerest sights it is to observe to imagine is a Mexican sitting on a junky half as large as himself, his feet touching the ground, his hands on his knees, his immense trail of wood smears as a screen for the cooler and an additional burden for the poor animal. Hearing that there is a store in the place, we went to inspect it. A very venerable old man, a well known geologist, who has lived in this country one thousand years old—conducted us into plastered and whitewashed room, 10 feet by 12, in which a rude counter and a few shelves held a few articles. All the things were made of wood: our boxes of supplies, one old mule, two worn old dirty Navajo blankets, a soldier's new uniform coat, and a barrel of whiskey. We all took a drink of the latter.

There was very little to buy, very limited in the variety.

so localities where they have not come in contact with Americans and Europeans, and where some of the same superstitions and contempt of the "Gringos" for them. Every person we met saluted you with a pleasant and honest "buenos dias," or "buenos noches," and there is no doubt that this is a country in actual contact with the world, more of a gentleman than a cauchucha of corresponding intellectual status.

The day after our arrival at San Mateo, the topographer of the party being engaged in an important matter, I was permitted to follow up the course of two cañons to ascertain their length and general direction. To this end I was furnished with a Mexican as guide and a soldier as escort. The first mile was a very easy one, but the Mexican, who had been given the Mexicans of the troops equipped of the fellow kept us in a roar of laughter all day, especially as he never lost his good humor under all his trials, but sang

steep slope of the canon, the guide and the expedition. Looking around, I sensed on the opposite side of the head of the canon a very steep rocky ascending, looking back at me occasionally, but evidently no more inclined to seek my vicinity than I did. I felt much better when my presence was no longer came to mind, and I turned to my own, for with my carbine and revolver, I was then strapped to the saddle, and had been benevolently disposed he would have found me entirely defenceless. Mease like the one I have just mentioned, is furnished with a gun, and he would furnish excellent summer pasture for small herds of cattle or sheep, but the volume of water furnished by the springs, which are found at long distances from each other, is inadequate for large herds. On the morning of the Fourth of July, we spent quietly in camp; resting; that is, there was much washing and mending of clothes, cleaning of shoes, taking

volcano, but the junks was too transparent. During the day we had passed localities where the natives were busy making up their miserable small boats, while a scent of hair from the small hogs, stopping doubly to examine into the matter we found the huts a quarter of an inch thick, averaging one and a half feet in depth, and each inhabited by two or three persons, a female, with a good stock of honey in each hole. This is the "New Mexican bee."

Passing numerous dry rivers, formidable perhaps in winter, in summer, drinking such bad water, we finally arrived at a place, where, last night, we were surprised to find the ruins of an outpost of civilization, though in possession of the ruins we left civilization behind us at Santa Fe, or before. Here we have now upon a week riding up and down the country, seen nothing but small parties who have never arrived, and who are badly infected with rattlesnakes, one of which was generous enough to permit the leader of the